

BRAZIL RECORDS LOWEST AMAZON DEFORESTATION RATES FOR AUGUST SINCE 2004

Proactive enforcement operations and monitoring initiatives led to 21.8 percent decrease in deforestation rates from July to August 2011

BRASÍLIA (October 3, 2011) - Deforestation rates in the Amazon fell by 21.8 percent from July to August 2011 as a result of enforcement efforts and monitoring initiatives by the Brazilian government, Minister of Environment Izabella Teixeira announced today in Brasília. Data released by the National Space Research Institute (INPE) show an estimated 163.8 square kilometers of forests cleared during this period, down from 224.9 square kilometers in July 2011.

INPE figures show a 38.2 percent year-on-year decrease in deforestation rates compared to August 2010 and a 67.1 percent decrease compared to August 2009 rates.

"These are the lowest rates for the month of August since we started monitoring deforestation rates on a monthly basis in 2004," said Minister Teixeira at today's press conference. "Preliminary data and information from our agents in the field indicate that we'll also see positive results for September."

Brazil's strategy to tackle deforestation in the Amazon is strengthened by INPE's near real-time satellite monitoring of forest regions to improve the accuracy of alerts for field operations. The government also works to support the expansion of sustainable activities in the region.

"The measures we have implemented since April, such as setting up a crisis task-force and sending additional enforcement agents to the field, have had a great impact in reducing deforestation in the region," said Mauro Pires, Director of Policies to Combat Deforestation at the Ministry of Environment.

From January to August 2011, enforcement activities administered by the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Natural Renewable Resources (IBAMA) resulted in the suspended titles for 72,490 hectares of land, the closing of 55 sawmills and the seizing of 61,000 cubic meters of wood and 353 trucks and tractors.

In 2010, deforestation rates in the Amazon reached the lowest rates ever recorded for the second consecutive year. According to updated data released by INPE, deforestation in 2010 included 7,000 square kilometers of forests, resulting in a record-breaking decrease in rates since monitoring began in 1988.

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